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SECURITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED
PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 864 (1993)
CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA

# LETTER DATED 23 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

I have the honour to transmit to you, in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 864 (1993), information on Botswana's implementation of Council resolutions 1127 (1997) and 1173 (1998) on sanctions against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Botswana has for some time now been searching aircraft destined for Angola which sought to overfly Botswana territory en route. The same regime of search and seizure has been applied to aircraft seeking to fly from Botswana, particularly from northern Botswana, the popular tourist region of the Okavango Delta. Since July 1998, 40 random searches of small aircraft to and from the Okavango Delta were conducted and in all instances no contraband was found.

Customs officials at all Botswana border posts and airports have been placed on alert to intercept and search vehicles, aircraft and persons departing for Angola. The officials have also been instructed to detain any illicit goods that may be discovered in the course of the searches.

The Directorate of Civil Aviation has instructed the Air Transport Division responsible for processing clearances of all flights using Botswana airspace:

(a) To scrutinize all aircraft clearance requests for flights destined for Angola and States neighbouring Angola;

(b) To obtain irrefutable proof that the Government of Angola is aware of and approves of the flight, its destination and the cargo and/or passengers on board;

(c) To specifically consult the Director of Civil Aviation before clearance of such aircraft is issued.

The Flight Safety Division has also been instructed that aircraft of the description to be provided under Security Council resolution 1173 (1998) by the Angolan Government are not to be maintained in any Botswana registered aircraft maintenance organization. The resolution requires the Government of Angola to provide a list of aircraft and airfields to facilitate the implementation of the resolution. To date, Botswana has not received such a list. However, no request for maintenance, repairs or spare parts for such aircraft has been reported.

Between July and September 1998, the Directorate of Civil Aviation has received 18 clearance requests for flights to Angola, of which two were denied because they could not provide proof of authorization from the Government of Angola. Botswana's Civil Aviation has established satellite communication with the Luanda air traffic controller, and all requests for aircraft clearance are brought to the attention of the Angolan authorities for approval. This includes requests for overflight clearance for aircraft that enter Angolan airspace from Botswana but identify destinations other than Angola. In other words, only aircraft with an Angolan Government clearance certificate are allowed access to facilities of Maun airport in northern Botswana.

Of course, communication between Botswana and Angola is not free of difficulties or complications. This is particularly so when instant communication is required in order to verify or confirm something. However, the Angolan Embassy in Gaborone is, to some extent, always helpful.

Finally, Botswana has never had a UNITA office on its soil. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1773 (1998) the Immigration Department has decided that all visa applications in respect of Angolan nationals would henceforth be processed at headquarters. The applications are subjected to thorough vetting to ensure that UNITA officials falling under the travel restrictions are not allowed into Botswana. As from 7 July 1998, the Department has received 20 visa applications, all of which were granted. The applications were for Angolan Government officials to visit the Southern African Development Community and for Angolan Embassy officials.

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